UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.105/PV.392
23 June 1993

ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 392nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 18 June 1993, at 3.45 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria)

- Report of the Committee to the General Assembly (continued)
- Concluding statements
- Closing statement by the Chairman
- Closure of the session

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The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: Now that we have gone through the draft report, paragraph by paragraph, in informal session, I would like to proceed with the formal adoption of the report. As is our custom, we will adopt it section by section.

We turn first to document A/AC.105/L.202. We shall now consider Part I, "Introduction", which comprises paragraphs 1 to 15. May I take it that the Committee adopts Part I?

Part I of the draft report (A/AC.105/L.202) was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We next turn to Part II of the draft report, "Recommendations and decisions".

We shall first consider Section A, entitled "Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes", which comprises paragraphs 16 to 19. May I take it that the Committee adopts Section A of Part II?

Part II, Section A, of the draft report (A/AC.105/L.202) was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall next consider Section B of Part II, entitled "Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirtieth session; implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space". May I take it that the Committee adopts paragraphs 20 and 21?

Paragraphs 20 and 21 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We next turn to paragraphs 22 to 27. May I take it that the Committee adopts those paragraphs?

Paragraphs 22 to 27 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now take up paragraphs 28 to 46. May I take it that the Committee adopts those paragraphs?

Paragraphs 28 to 46 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We now turn to paragraphs 47 to 52. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee adopts those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 47 to 52 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now consider paragraphs 53 to 60. May I take it that the Committee adopts those paragraphs?

Paragraphs 53 to 60 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We now take up paragraphs 61 to 65. May I take it that the Committee adopts those paragraphs?

Paragraphs 61 to 65 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now take up paragraphs 66 to 69. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee adopts those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 61 to 65 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We now turn to paragraphs 70 to 72 and paragraphs 2 to 5 of document A/AC.105/L.202/Add.2. May I take it that the Committee adopts those paragraphs?

Paragraphs 70 to 72 and paragraphs 2 to 5 of document A/AC.105/L.202/Add.2 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We turn now to paragraphs 73 to 77. May I take it that the Committee adopts those paragraphs?

Paragraphs 73 to 77 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now take up paragraphs 78 to 84 and paragraph 6 of document A/AC.105/L.202/Add.2, which will become paragraph 82 of the report. May I take it that the Committee adopts those paragraphs?

Paragraphs 78 to 84 and paragraphs 6 of document A/AC.105/L.202/Add.2 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has thus adopted Part II of document A/AC.105/L.202.

(The Chairman)

We continue now with document A/AC.105/L.202/Add.1.

We shall first take up paragraphs 1 to 7. May I take it that the Committee wishes to adopt those paragraphs?

Paragraphs 1 to 7 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall now take up paragraphs 8 to 18. May I take it that the Committee wishes to adopt those paragraphs?

Paragraphs 8 to 18 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We turn now to the last part of Addendum 1, paragraphs 19 to 24. May I take it that the Committee wishes to adopt those paragraphs?

Paragraphs 19 to 24 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has thus adopted the portion of its report contained in document A/AC.105/L.202/Add.1.

We continue now with document A/AC.105/L.202/Add.3.

We have before us paragraphs 1 to 7. Does the Committee wish to adopt those paragraphs?

Paragraphs 1 to 7 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will now take up document A/AC.105/L.202/Add.4, because its contents follow the paragraphs just adopted.

May I take it that the Committee wishes to adopt paragraphs 1 to 4?

Paragraphs 1 to 4 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will now take up paragraphs 5 to 8.

For the benefit of the Committee, I shall read out once more the text of paragraph 5, which was read out in informal consultations. It reads as follows:

(The Chairman)

"The Committee noted the proposals made by several regional groups concerning interest of States in membership in the Committee. The Committee agreed that the Chairman of the Committee should continue urgent and intensive consultations with members of the Committee with a view to a consensus recommendation to be made to the President of the General Assembly in time for adoption by the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly."

Does the Committee wish to adopt paragraphs 5 to 8?

Paragraphs 5 to 8 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We now return to document A/AC.105/L.202/Add.3, and turn to paragraphs 8 to 13. I take it that the Committee adopts those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 8 to 13 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has thus adopted Addendum 3.

We shall now take up, as a whole, the Committee's draft report on its work at the thirty-sixth session. May I take it that the Committee adopts the draft report, as a whole?

The draft report, as a whole, was adopted.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

Mr. TELLES RIBEIRO (Brazil), Rapporteur: At this stage, I should like to thank all the delegations with which I have had the honour and the pleasure to work, and also all those who supported our efforts. The flexibility demonstrated by all, in spite of some differences of view, was essential to the successful conclusion of this report.

(Mr. Telles Ribeiro, Rapporteur)

I should also like to thank Mr. Jasentuliyana, Mr. Chipman and the Secretariat for the invaluable help and advice they provided the Rapporteur. They did a great job, which is no surprise, as they have done so before. I can assure members that for a Rapporteur, it is highly comforting to have them around.

Finally, I should also like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the support you gave me throughout the session, as well as for the trust in me you demonstrated by allowing me to conduct certain negotiations on your behalf. My share of these negotiations was, of course, very small and limited compared with the burdens that fell on your shoulders. So, with my thanks, permit me also to convey to you, Sir, my deep appreciation for the way in which you chaired this session.

Mr. LOUET (France) (interpretation from French): I should like to make a statement for the record relating to paragraph 8 of document A/AC.105/L.202/Add.4, in the section of the report on "Recommendations and decisions", under the heading "Other matters".

The question of the venue for the session of the Legal Subcommittee, on which there were informal exchanges of view, moves the French delegation to make the following comments.

The General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, has stated the principle that the location of some of the activities of the United Nations Secretariat should be changed, thereby making savings. This decision has been supplemented, or is being supplemented, by measures by the Secretary-General within his area of competence.

(Mr. Louet, France)

My delegation feels that it is absolutely essential that there should be a clear separation in this matter between the sovereignty of States as expressed through the General Assembly and the prerogatives of the Secretary-General. In this regard, it does not appear to be a good method if measures that are internal to the Organization - I am tempted to say "administrative measures" - should prejudice the position of States on so sensitive a subject as the venues for the bodies in which they take part.

It is for States to assess, freely, the situations put before them and then make up their own minds based on the many criteria that are entirely theirs to decide.

General Assembly resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985, which is cited in paragraph 8 of Addendum 4, reaffirmed, in paragraph 4, the so-called "headquarters rule", in other words,

> "the general principle that, in drawing up the schedule of conferences and meetings, United Nations bodies shall plan to meet at their respective established headquarters".

(Mr. Louet, France)

It is good practice to refer to General Assembly resolutions, not partially, but in their entirety. In paragraph 4, part I of resolution 40/243 lists a number of exceptions to the general principle, which it reaffirms. One of these provides that

> "The sessions of the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space shall be held alternately at United Nations Headquarters and the United Nations Office at Geneva". (resolution 40/243, Part I, para. 4 (h))

Recent decisions of the General Assembly seem to indicate that United Nations space activities will henceforth take place at Vienna. This transfer implies that Vienna will succeed New York as headquarters for the space activities of the United Nations. Hence, the French delegation considers that, following the general principle of the headquarters rule, the outer space Committee, like the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, should hold its meetings at Vienna.

With respect to the Legal Subcommittee, whatever the modalities of alternating sessions, a recommendation by the Committee to the General Assembly that could entail a loss of activities at Geneva would be unacceptable from our point of view. The French delegation continues firmly to support the proper position of Geneva among United Nations insitutions; we note that until now no arrangements have ever called into question the status of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

Every delegation will see that headquarters questions and questions of allocating activities among the various United Nations locations can hardly be evaluated in the context of this Committee alone. They are the subject of

(Mr. Louet, France)

much overall thought and cannot be fully considered in a single body such as this one.

Hence, the French position can be summed up as follows: my delegation has no objection to sessions of the full Committee and of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee taking place at Vienna. But with respect to the Legal Subcommittee we cannot accept, in this specific area, questioning the recognized role hitherto entrusted to Geneva. It is a matter of institutional balance both in terms of the United Nations as a whole and, more specifically, in terms of its space activities.

Taking those considerations into account the French delegation accepts the text of paragraph 8, which is now before us. But let me make it clear that we accept it only because in our view it means that, in conformity with the alternating-sessions regime of resolution 40/243, every other session will take place at Geneva.

Mr. CHANDRASEKHAR (India): I wish to say a few words about a third United Nations conference on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space (UNISPACE). Even though the idea originated with an Indian statement at the last session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS): some country must be the first to start. But I would like to put it on record that the idea emerged from a group of nations, several of which were involved in the process. The idea came out of panel discussions we held during last year's session as a part of the International Space Year; one panel concerned "New approaches to international cooperation in space in a changing world". That led to talk of a third UNISPACE conference.

(Mr. Chandrasekhar, India)

During the COPUOS session, we proposed a third UNISPACE conference with a view to consolidating the momentum provided by the International Space Year, to broadening further the scope of international cooperation and, of course, to promoting space technology and space applications in developing nations. Those were the principles under which all member States agreed by consensus to discuss a third UNISPACE conference in this Committee under "Other matters".

Subsequently, during the last session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, there was strong support for organizing a third UNISPACE conference from the Group of 77; I again recall that it was the Group of 77 that came up with the proposal to hold the UNISPACE conference. But in the negotiations that took place in the Working Group of the Whole, in which a large number of other countries participated, a proposal was adopted by consensus and later endorsed by the Subcommittee. It read, in part, as follows:

> "Considering the benefits that accrued as a result of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82), and noting that there have been considerable advances and changes in space technology and applications since 1982, as well as many changes in the geopolitical and economic situations affecting space programmes around the globe, the Working Group recommended that it could be useful to address the potential for a third UNISPACE conference."

Later, based on the views expressed by some member States, the Subcommittee endorsed discussion of this subject in the main Committee, under "Other matters", with a view to arriving at details on objectives, goals and other aspects such as organization and so on.

(Mr. Chandrasekhar, India)

During this session, my country endeavoured to organize the Committee's thoughts on these matters. We realize that there is a lot more to be done. Member States have made several suggestions on how we should improve upon the concept and on other alternatives that could possibly be looked into. I am sure many nations here represented will be willing to work on this.

Again, the proposal for a third UNISPACE conference is not due entirely to one nation or group of nations. Many other nations have been talking of it.

With respect to the Committee's recommendations, my delegation wants to thank all Member States, the Group of 77 and, particularly, the Russian Federation, which helped us achieve consensus paragraphs on this matter. Of course, we also thank the Chairman, the Rapporteur, the Secretary and the other Committee staff.

My country would like to make a submission on the question of the admission of new members, specifically the proposal brought before the Committee on the admission of Kazakhstan. Yesterday, our colleague from the Asian Group, the representative of Japan, spoke about this; we are in full agreement with him. Kazakhstan is part of a large continent, Asia, which looks to high technology to solve common problems. Certainly it deserves to be admitted to the Committee. We believe that this is a peculiar situation that arose basically because of the changes in the geopolitical situation. We should recognize that fact when we take a decision on this admission. Hence, the Committee should support the admission of Kazakhstan.

My country, of course, would welcome any other nation that wishes to make a positive contribution to the work of the Committee.

Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): At the outset, Sir, let me thank you for your - as always - skilful, painstaking and thorough leadership of the work of the Committee, thanks to which the session has on the whole taken place in the customary climate of trust, mutual understanding and confidence.

At the same time, we regret that the space State of Kazakhstan has been deprived of the opportunity to participate in the activities of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze, Russian Federation)

This is the result of the prevalence of group interests and the dominance of political interests in a number of groups. It is not conducive to the creation of an atmosphere of trust or to serious work in this Committee on questions relating to cooperation in outer space.

In view of all that, we express the hope that this serious defect in the work of the Outer Space Committee will be overcome soon - indeed, during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. SALAZAR (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): First, I should like to express the Spanish delegation's admiration for the inexhaustible energy - whose source is actually, I believe, nuclear - that the Chairman and the other officers of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space have placed at the disposal of the Committee, enabling it to conclude its work on time.

I should like to make a statement on behalf of Spain, Greece, Portugal and Turkey. We wish to reiterate our proposal that the rotation system, which has been applied on a temporary basis, be ended. At the same time, our four countries express once again our desire to participate permanently in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

Speaking now on my own, national behalf, I wish to state the following.

Spain has repeatedly requested permanent membership of this Committee. The last occasion on which we made this request was 23 November 1990 - almost three years ago. Hence, my country does have a certain priority over Members that requested admission after that date.

In conclusion, I express the hope that during the consultations that are to take place among the members of the Outer Space Committee we shall be able

(Mr. Salazar, Spain)

to reach a solution satisfactory to all of the countries that are interested in and capable of making a significant contribution to this Committee's work. As a present member of the Committee, Spain is prepared to participate in these consultations as often and as intensely as required.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I can assure the Committee that I do not have a nuclear source of energy; I only do the best I can, in conformity with my abilities, to facilitate the Committee's work.

Miss MENDES (Portugal): The representative of Spain has just spoken on behalf of four countries, including my own. I wish merely to add a few words.

First, the Chairman deserves our praise not only for the way he has led the Committee's work but for his efforts during the past few days when we have been trying to find a constructive and suitable solution to the problem we have been discussing in a restricted group. I should like to emphasize that all of us are aware that the question of membership is extremely delicate and complex. Since 1977 we have had an agreement with Spain - which has been honoured by both our countries - that each of us would have, alternately, a three-year period as a member of the Committee and a three-year period as an observer. So I feel that, even if I am seated here today, I am actually a half-member and a half-observer.

As a question of principle, we think - and I say this is on a national basis - that the rotation we have with Spain was supposed to be very temporary, while awaiting an opportunity for both countries to become full-time members of the Committee.

(Miss Mendes, Portugal)

Thus, as the representative of Spain said on behalf of our four countries, must be solved before, or at the same time as, a decision is taken on the question of a further enlargement of the Committee. The real issue is enlargement and the criteria for that. I think that the Chairman's suggestion on the paragraph on membership will make it possible for all of us to reflect on the issue so that a decision can be taken at a later stage.

I assure you, Mr. Chairman, that you will have the Portuguese delegation's full cooperation during the forthcoming consultations.

Mr. MORENO FERNANDEZ (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): First, I congratulate you and the other officers of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, as well as the Committee itself, on having successfully concluded this thirty-sixth session.

I should also like to echo what has just been said by the representatives of Spain and the Russian Federation.

First, my country's situation is to a certain extent like that of Spain. As the Committee knows, many years ago Cuba asked to be admitted to membership of this Committee. This was confirmed, Mr. Chairman, on 21 August 1990 to your predecessor, Ambassador Peter Jankowitsch, to the Secretary-General, to the Secretary of this Committee, and to the President of the General Assembly. It was also confirmed to you, Mr. Chairman, in a letter which was addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Cuba and which you received today. Therefore, like the delegation of Spain, my delegation feels that when a decision is taken on the admission of new members to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, account should be taken, on a priority basis, of the cases of States that for many years have been requesting admission to membership of this Committee, precisely in order to make a positive and constructive contribution to its work.

(Mr. Moreno Fernandez, Cuba)

Therefore, bearing in mind the effectiveness and impartiality that you, Mr. Chairman, have shown both during this session and at previous sessions of the Committee, I would ask you to take Cuba's request into account during the consultations you will be carrying out between now and the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

I turn now to the comments made by the representative of the Russian Federation. The delegation of Cuba wishes to echo those comments also and, like the delegation of the Russian Federation, we hope that this Committee's work will not be hampered in any way by political considerations, which, in our view, have nothing to do with the constructive atmosphere that should prevail in our work.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Kazakhstan.

Ms. ARYSTANBEKOVA (Kazakhstan) (interpretation from Russian): Permit me to express our deep gratitude to all those countries, in particular the members of the Asian Group, that supported Kazakhstan's application for membership during this session, and including during today's meeting and in the informal consultations on the question of increasing the membership of the Committee. We should like to sincerely thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Committee, for your efforts to find a constructive solution to this question. At the same time, the delegation of Kazakhstan wishes to express its regret that the outcome of this session's informal consultations was that the question of Kazakhstan's membership in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space would not be resolved positively.

In this regard, I should like to reiterate what we have said repeatedly in our statements at the Committee's thirty-fifth session, at the meeting of the Special Political Committee during the main part of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly and at this thirty-sixth session of the Committee.

The Government of Kazakhstan, a country that is a space Power, is making clear its enormous interest in participating in and strengthening international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space. We are convinced that Kazakhstan, which has a significant space infrastructure and participates actively in devising and implementing peaceful space programmes, including international ones, could contribute to the work of the Committee and to mutually beneficial cooperation with all countries in the interest and to the benefit of scientific and technical progress throughout the world.

(Ms. Arystanbekova, Kazakhstan)

We feel that countries with adequate space infrastructures not only would but should take part in the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and that they are prepared to use that infrastructure to achieve our common goals.

One can count on one's fingers the countries that have space launch pads. One of those countries is Kazakhstan, on whose ancient land lies the world-famous Baikonur space facility, the first in the world. Kazakhstan is already engaged in international cooperation with national and regional space agencies in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space.

We are pleased to note that the progress achieved by our country in various space-related programmes is recognized in paragraph 62 of the report of the Committee that has just been adopted. We should like to express the hope that, taking into account Kazakhstan's status as a space Power, the Committee will be able to find a positive solution to this question, which has remained too long pending.

Mr. MOTSYK (Ukraine) (interpretation from Russian): At the outset, the delegation of Ukraine would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your skillful and capable guidance of the work of the Committee.

The delegation of Ukraine, like several others - in particular the delegation of Kazakhstan - would like to express its regret that during this session of the Committee it has not been possible to take a positive decision on the question of Kazakhstan's membership in the Committee. We hope that the consultations to be held on the question of Committee membership will lead, during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, to acceptance of the Republic of Kazakhstan as a member of the Committee.

Mr. DAMICO (Brazil): As we conclude the thirty-sixth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), my delegation wishes to place on record its final remarks.

A sobre assessment will show that we have witnessed a very intense and controversial yet successful session of COPUOS. In relation to the substantive items on our agenda, during this session we have agreed to the inclusion of the item on space debris on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, a very important step in dealing with the relationship of the terrestrial and outer space environments.

Concerning the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 3), we had a very frank exchange of views that was conducive to the continuation at a more specific level of our discussions on the possible convening of such a conference. Also, with regard to the administrative matters of the Committee, in spite of the inherent difficulties of what was at stake, we agreed, in a very constructive atmosphere, on the venues of COPUOS, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the 1994 meeting of the Legal Subcommittee, as requested in resolution 47/212 B.

As to the question of application for membership in the Committee, my delegation wishes to reiterate its support for Kazakhstan's application and other applications before us. After devoting most of our energies in the last few days to the question of the enlargement of the Committee, we still have reason to be optimistic about the possible solution of this matter at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Damico, Brazil)

A much-needed clarification of this topic is that the recommendation of COPUOS on applications is very useful and paves the way for a decision by the General Assembly. However, the lack of agreement does not prevent the Committee from reaching a decision on a recommendation, since such a recommendation becomes effective only after a decision by the General Assembly. These difficulties only prompt us to work even harder to find a solution capable of satisfying all parties concerned.

We are fully confident, Mr. Chairman, that under your stewardship in the informal consultations we shall be holding in this connection we shall be able to reach the consensus we so desire. My delegation wishes to thank you for your efforts during the previous informal consultations. That we have been able to adopt a very comprehensive report bears witness to the fact that your commitment was not in vain.

We should also like to thank the secretariat for its tireless efforts, and all other delegations for the flexibility they have displayed during the negotiations.

Mr. YAMAMOTO (Japan): I wish to put on record Japan's view regarding the question of membership.

In its earlier intervention, my delegation stressed the qualifications of Kazakhstan and the underlying considerations behind the Asian Group's discussion. I wish only to see a very successful and early resolution of this question, under your able guidance, Sir. At the conclusion of the work of the current session, my delegation wishes to pay a high tribute to you and to express its great appreciation for your very able guidance, under which we have achieved very successful results.

Mr. LIU Daqun (China) (interpretation from Chinese): First, the Chinese delegation would like to express its appreciation for the great efforts you, Sir, and the Secretariat have made. At this session the Committee has discussed many and varied questions, on some of which, through your outstanding diplomatic skills, we have achieved unanimous agreement. We have also adopted the report.

However, we would like to put on record two observations. First, in reference to the application of new members, the Chinese delegation, as a member of the Asian Group, supports the candidacy of the delegation of Kazakhstan, a country with space capabilities. At the same time, because of the changes on the international scene, there are more countries in the Asian region. Therefore, the Chinese delegation supports the comments made by the representatives of India and Japan. We also welcome the contribution of countries from other regions to the work of this Committee.

Secondly, as to the transfer of the Office for Outer Space Affairs to Vienna, we support the Committee's decision that next year's session, including the meetings of the Legal Subcommittee, will be held in that city.

(Mr. Liu Daqun, China)

However, we have the following observations regarding resolution 40/243, adopted on 18 December 1985. We believe that the meetings of the Legal Subcommittee should be held alternately in Europe and the United States, because holding meetings in the United States will offer a greater opportunity for delegations of developing countries to participate in the discussion. We hope that China's views will be taken into account at next year's session.

Mr. ZAWELS (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): I would simply like to reaffirm my delegation's support for the candidacies of Cuba and Nicaragua from the Latin American and Caribbean Group, and to express support for the candidacies of Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey and Kazakhstan. We would also like to express our hope that the consultations which you, Sir, will be holding on this issue will be held on the basis of the principles of the sovereign equality of States and of equitable geographic distribution.

Mr. REY (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): First, I should like to say how pleased I am over the way in which you, Sir, and the entire Bureau have guided the work of this session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I am well aware that at this session it was not easy. I was with you almost all the time as you strove to find solutions to the problems that arose, and I think we avoided any catastrophe. The truth is that we, too, regret that it has not been possible to resolve the problem of increased membership of the Committee or to accept candidacies presented by the regions, because that would have made things much easier.

As for Kazakhstan, my delegation has had the opportunity to tell the delegation of that country how pleased we would have been if it had become a member of the Committee. My delegation feels that this whole problem will be

(Mr. Rey, Colombia)

solved through the series of talks you, Sir, will be holding, and that there will be no need for us to resolve it in the General Assembly, because I believe that justice and equity in dealing with regional claims must prevail.

You are aware, Sir, that the Latin American and Caribbean region proposed Cuba and Nicaragua for membership of the Committee and that certain factors to which I do not wish to refer now prevented their being accepted. However, I believe that good sense will prevail, that we will reach agreement on these matters, and that all the regions will realize that, by approaching this matter equitably and with justice for all, we will be able to make progress in our work.

Mr. KAITA (Nigeria): My delegation joins previous speakers in placing on record its appreciation of the even-handed manner in which you, Sir, have handled the Committee's work.

Though it is regrettable that we were not able to conclude satisfactorily the question of membership, we would like to put on record that Nigeria will continue to support the position of the Group of 77 on the questions of membership and of equitable representation. We will abide by whatever decision is made in that regard.

CLOSING STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: Before concluding the thirty-sixth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, I should like to say some words in my capacity as Chairman.

First of all, I should like to say to you, my colleagues, that I am satisfied with the substantial progress in the Committee. That means that we should not underestimate the fact that we agreed on a very important issue, that of space debris. You know very well that for practically all regions - and all regions of the world are represented on this Committee - space debris has become an important concern.

We know, on the other hand, that there is of course a need for a well-prepared discussion of this item, and, after this session of the Committee, I am comforted once more in my hope that we will come to a very constructive debate on this very important item.

I should like at this stage to comment also on the fact that all delegations were involved in the question of a third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and I should pay a particular tribute at this stage to the delegation of India, which put forward this proposal and also showed, together with other delegations, of course, very great flexibility and a high degree of pragmatism in the follow-up debate, which made it possible for us to include this matter in our report.

We should also not underestimate the debates on many other issues of a substantive nature that we have had in this Committee, and I should draw your attention to the fact that items such as, for example, the reports of the Legal Subcommittee and of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, containing very important material on questions such as nuclear power sources, remote sensing and many other issues - not to forget spin-off benefits, which

(The Chairman)

relate also to the work of our Main Committee - showed in a very impressive manner how the Committee can deal with matters of substance, in other words, with the main challenges for the future of mankind. We all know, after all, that matters such as the space environment and, as we have seen during the debates on International Space Year, many other matters concerning life on Earth in future, depend today on space technology and on further research and science relating to outer space matters.

It is absolutely clear that these challenges and the matters of substance before the Committee increase the attractiveness of the Committee for those countries that, regrettably, are not represented here as full members. I have listened very carefully to the statements by observer delegations of countries that would like to join the Committee, and I should like to say at this stage that it is my serious commitment to the Committee to achieve an acceptable solution on the basis of consensus so that the Committee and its Chairman, in accordance with the request contained in the report, may communicate a suitable recommendation to the President of the General Assembly during the next General Assembly session.

I must, however, say certain blunt words: I understand, to a certain degree, that the matter of new admissions is a matter of extreme sensitivity for all members of the Committee and for all regional groups represented here - and all regional groups are represented on this Committee. At the same time, I must make a very serious appeal to you all to support the Chairman. These are no empty words; I very often hear that you have confidence in me and in my conduct in chairing the Committee, but I must again repeat what I said in informal consultations at a very delicate stage: it is your work, your cooperation that are important; the Chairman cannot act without you - and, finally, these are also your successes or your failures.

(The Chairman)

I therefore appeal to you all to take very serious note of what we have heard today, at this last meeting, from all those delegations that spoke on the question of new admissions. We should not forget that there are many countries outside the Committee that may participate as observers but have a very deep interest in working with us constructively on substantive matters, and I wish to say as Chairman that I can understand their great interest in working with us.

I should like to say that the Chairman will certainly undertake all effort to arrive at a constructive solution; the word "constructive" here means for me an agreement by all members of the Committee on this question.

My final comment on this point is that you must be very conscious of the need to preserve the spirit of this Committee, which has up till now been notable for its excellence; I have heard much from the Chairmen of other United Nations bodies, who have said to me that they look at this Committee as an example of how one can undertake extremely difficult scientific, technical, legal and political work that has a great deal of influence on the national decisions of countries that undertake space activities, because the Committee reaches agreements on matters such as nuclear power sources, remote sensing or possibly, in the future, on other matters of enormous relevance to all countries Members of the United Nations, and particularly to those that either have their own space activities or benefit from space activities. We should therefore be aware that it is very important to preserve the traditional spirit of solidarity between us here in the Committee and those who are not in the Committee. I therefore appeal to you all to continue to show me, in the future and during the necessary consultations on this matter, the same degree of cooperation that you have showed me during this and previous sessions.

(The Chairman)

Before concluding the session, I should like to express special appreciation to the Rapporteur of the Committe, Edgard Telles Ribeiro, who was working with me for the first time. I call this a joint venture between him, a colleague from a third-world country that is, as we know, very important indeed, and me, from a small, industrialized country in Europe, in the Chair of the Committee. I must say that I was very impressed by the manner in which he conducted his own task, which was an enormous one; I can tell you that the Rapporteur in this Committee has a real and substantive workload that is very important, and I should like to pay a particular tribute to him.

I should at the same time like to express my thanks to the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Ambassador Munteanu, who helped me in my work.

I come now to the secretariat, and here also I have some very blunt words to say to members. The secretariat of the Outer Space Office is one of the most dedicated units in the United Nations Secretariat; for decades now they have done an enormous amount of work for us; and they are, under the guidance of Mr. Jasentuliyana, a very dedicated and remarkable staff.

(The Chairman)

I know that for many members it will not be easy for this Secretariat unit to move to a new "duty station", as General Assembly terminology has it. But I assure them all that they will be welcomed with the traditional and very cordial hospitality of a small European country.

I wish also to express my appreciation to the verbatim reporters; I know some of them from my previous time on the Security Council, and I am happy to see that they are as dedicated as ever. I thank the interpreters, translators, conference officers and all the others who helped us, particularly during this difficult second week of the session.

My home country, Austria, will be enormously proud and pleased to welcome you all to Vienna, to forthcoming meetings of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies. We are very sensitive to the specific interests of the developing countries. My country will certainly do everything it can for all participants in these meetings to make their stay during the meetings in Vienna as pleasant as possible.

I therefore say "Auf wiedersehen in Wien".

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: I declare closed the thirty-sixth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.